



## Highcliffe St Mark Primary School

### Physical development in the Early Years

- How to help your child build a strong core
- How to help your child to develop early writing skills



Core stability is having strength in the shoulders, pelvis, stomach and back. This is necessary to develop skills in both large and small movement.

The children at Highcliffe St Mark have daily physical exercise in the Learning Garden to develop this.



## Floor Play

Give your child lots of opportunities to play on the floor - lying down, propping themselves up and rolling. This will help them to strengthen their core muscles, which in turn improves control of their limbs and small movement skills such as using tools and writing.

- Encourage your child to lie on the floor to do jig-saws, play with toys and read books.
- Give your child a clipboard so that he/she can write and draw in a propped position.
- Make a den by draping sheets over the gaps between furniture
- Show your child how to make a 'bridge' - lie on the floor, keep shoulders head and feet on the floor and lift the hips and trunk off the floor.
- Show your child how to roll like a pencil (arms close to sides of body).
- Show your child how to log roll (make a long thin shape with arms above head)



## Crawling

Crawling helps to develop head control, balance, core stability, strength in the back, neck, legs, arms, hands and fingers. It supports the development of visual skills and communication between the left and the right sides of the body and the upper and lower parts of the body.

- Make an obstacle course using furniture, boxes etc. for your child to crawl under over or through.
- Pretend to be four legged animals - you could add rhymes and music to this.
- Climbing ladders, cargo nets and trees is vertical crawling.
- Show your child how to kneel on all fours with hands directly under shoulders, hands flat on floor and knees under hips. Lift and stretch out one arm or one leg alternately. When they have mastered this try one arm and the opposite leg at the same time.
- Have a crawling race indoors or on the lawn (a grassy slope is good for racing up).



## More big physical activities and ideas to try

- Give your child many opportunities for balancing and for moving their weight from one body part to another such as from one leg to another.
- Let your child to carry items from one place to another such as bags of shopping and water in buckets.
- Explore moving in different ways and on different surfaces. For example, walking through a muddy field, running in the sea and over stepping stones.
- Encourage your child to help tidy and clean up after an activity. Stretching up to put things away and using mops/brushes helps the child to develop a strong core stability!



## How to help your child to develop early writing skills:

In order to be able to write, children need to develop wrist, hand and finger strength to hold and control a pencil.

### Developing hand strength

Many skills are required to develop an efficient pencil grasp. These include the ability to move fingers in isolation of each other, adequate hand muscle strength, & good wrist stability.

- Encourage your child to pop bubble wrap using the whole hand and individual fingers.
- Use dough to “work out” fingers and the whole hand. Encourage your child to squeeze, poke with individual fingers and thumbs, roll and pat the dough with the whole hand.
- Place dough in rubber/latex glove, encouraging your child to manipulate and squeeze the gloves.
- Add shaving foam and food colouring to a zip lock bag, encouraging your child to make marks and patterns by using the flat of the hand and individual fingers.

- Encourage your child to pour water using a small jug, plastic bottles and watering cans.
- Play finger football using a ping pong ball. Encourage your child to use individual fingers to shoot at the goal
- Provide two handed activities e. g. unscrewing lids from bottles/jars, wringing water out of doll's clothes or holding a mixing bowl and stirring the contents.

### **More ideas to try**

- Play "Feed the tennis ball." Make a slit in a tennis ball (the mouth) and decorate with ears and a nose. Encourage your child to feed the tennis ball, by squeezing the ball to open and popping dried pasta into its mouth.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play with sponges, wash items e. g. bikes and wring the water out of the sponge.
- Using a bulb syringe e. g. ear syringe or eye dropper, have a race by squeezing them to blow a cotton wool ball or table tennis ball across a finish line.